

THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE
STATE OF GEORGIA

IN THE MATTER OF:
ELECTIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC MEETING

THE OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE
THE CAPITOL OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA
214 STATE CAPITOL
ROOM 341
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27, 2011
10:00 A.M.

PRESIDING OFFICER: BRIAN P. KEMP
 SECRETARY OF STATE

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APPEARANCE OF THE PANEL FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

JEFF “BODINE” SINYARD
CHARLOTTE SOSEBEE
DAVID SHOCK
ANNE LEWIS
SENATOR HARDIE DAVIS
JUDGE TODD BLACKWELL
SECRETARY OF STATE BRIAN P. KEMP
BETH KISH
MIKE JABLONSKI
REPRESENTATIVE MARK HAMILTON
RICHARD BARCLIFT
NANCY BOREN
MAYOR CHARLES SCHWABE
REPRESENTATIVE RUSTY KIDD

SECRETARY KEMP: I'd like to call the first meeting of the Secretary of State's Elections Advisory Council to order. And with that we'll say the pledge and we'll just get started, so if everyone would bow your heads with me.

(INVOCATION)

SECRETARY KEMP: Would you stand and we'll say the pledge.

(PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE)

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you very much. I know we've got a few members that are coming in now and I know Representative Kidd and a few others may be a few minutes late. The first thing I wanted to do is to thank the council members for their service and their time and efforts of getting here and volunteering to serve on this advisory council.

I'd also like to remind everybody that just because you're not on the council does not mean that you're not part of the process. We want all our election's officials across the state and our elected officials and our citizens to participate in our -- in this process.

We've done a lot of things to be able to make that possible with our public meetings we're going to be having and also through our website that we've created which you can get through the Secretary of State's homepage. There's an opportunity to email your suggestions there and even attach documents if you'd like to submit them. You certainly are free and able to submit documents to us today. We'll make sure that all the committee members get that.

With that I'd like for the members that are here today just to give a brief, you know, 30 second to one-minute introduction of themselves, telling us a little bit about them so that you all know and the other members serving on this council will know kind of where everybody is from and if there's a certain group or constituency that they're representing. We're proud of the committee that we have and while I wish we could have had more people, we had to decide on the number.

But we've got -- you know, really a bipartisan council. We've also got elections and elected officials representing cities, counties, and the state legislature and the whole state is represented, north, south, east and west.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I'll let you start it off and we'll just kind of work this way.

MR. SINYARD: Thank you, Secretary.

SECRETARY KEMP: Let me get you a mic.

MR. SINYARD: My name is Bodine Sinyard and I'm from Albany, Georgia, Chairman of the Dougherty County Commission and I'm just glad to be here and to be part of the process, Secretary. Thank you.

MS. SOSEBEE: Good morning, my name is Charlotte Sosebee and I'm from Hall County where I've been a part of elections for 22 years. I serve as Interim Director of Elections for Hall County and have been for four years and I'm a proud mother and grandmother and I am from the home of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the home of the Falcons, Atlanta Falcons training camp. I'm glad to be here.

MR. SHOCK: Hello, my name is David Shock. I'm an Associate Professor of Political Science at Kennesaw State University. I'm also Assistant Chairman of the Political Science and International Affairs Department. I teach American Government and state and local politics courses. In addition, I am Secretary of the State Libertarian Party and I have served on the state executive committee of the state party for the last six years in different capacities.

MS. LEWIS: I'm Anne Lewis. I'm a native of Savannah. I received my journalism degree from the University of Georgia and I went to Georgia State law school. I've been in private practice here in Atlanta for 21 years practicing really with the same group of people that whole time. I got involved in elections when I went to work with our law firm. I served as general counsel to the Georgia Republican Party, but in addition to that, probably about 50 percent of my practice is related to election and election law issues so I'm using the election code every day and I'd like to see some updating of that. Thank you very much.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you. I'm Senator Hardie Davis from Augusta. I'm Chairman of the Administration Cooperation Committee and I'm a member of the Senate Democratic Caucus.

MR. BLACKWELL: I'm Todd Blackwell. I'm the Probate Judge in Baldwin County. I'm also the election Superintendent and president of the Georgia Elections Officials Association and also the President of the Council of Probate Judges of Georgia.

MR. HAMILTON: Good morning, I'm Representative Mark Hamilton, District 23, which is in Forsyth County. I'm Chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee here in the House and I work in the House, which is where most, if not all, election law comes through so we hear much of the election law but also I've authored three pieces of legislation in the past two years dealing with change in election law so I'm very familiar with it and glad to be here.

MS. KISH: I'm Beth Kish. I work with the Cobb County Board of Elections and Registration where I am currently the Manager. I've been there since 1991. I'm also the current President of the Voter Registrars Association of Georgia and so as such I represent all the registration officials in the State of Georgia.

MS. JABLONSKI: I am Michael Jablonski. I'm Anne's counterpart from the Democratic Party where I'm General Counsel and I'm also counsel for the -- Democratic Caucuses. My degree is in economics from Emory University, as is my law degree and I'm currently a Ph.D. student at Georgia State University. I've been doing election's law since 1977 and almost exclusively doing election and political law for about the last ten years. I've had the opportunity since 2008 to visit all but 13 of the election supervisors in Georgia basically to discuss what

problems they've had. I found them all to be hardworking, intelligent but hampered by the complexity of our election code. So one of the things you're going to be hearing from me is how to make this a simpler process. I fully endorse what Anne had to say that our election code is in need of being revamped and I'm very glad the Secretary of the State is undertaking to do that.

MR. BARCLIFT: Good morning. I'm Richard Barclift with the City of Chickamauga and I've been the Elections Superintendent for the last four years and I'm also the General Manager for the City.

MS. BOREN: My name is Nancy Boren and I'm from Columbus, Muscogee County. I have held the position as Elections Director for about 16 years and been in city government though for 24 years. We are a combined Board of Elections and voter registration and we are the consolidated city council.

MR. SCHWABE: Good morning. My name is Charles Schwabe. I'm the Mayor of the City of Swainsboro. I have lost a few elections in my time but I can't blame that on the situation that we have here. Hopefully our presence here will help to improve the process and it's an honor to serve the Secretary.

SECRETARY KEMP: Okay. Thank y'all so much for those introductions. It's great to have such wonderful participation by so many members from a long ways away and I know it's going to be hard for every one of our members to attend all of our meetings, but I certainly appreciate y'all being here today.

I wanted to go through real quickly before we get into the public comments and try to give you some thoughts on why I have created the Elections Advisory Council. What I want to charge everybody with, if you will, and then give you a quick election's update on kind of what we've been working on in 2010 and this year, 2011, and a couple of other things. I had originally wanted to create an Elections Advisory Council so we could listen to ideas and concerns from the public, from organizations and their representatives, election officials, elected officials and really start a discussion on how we can improve our elections process for all Georgians. I think Mike brought up a great point, as well as Anne. I think if you look at the whole state election code, the rules, but also hear from the public and folks that are concerned about elections and that are also working with elections every day. And today is the start of that process. I hope that we can achieve through this process and the input from the council members, the public and make recommendations that will improve and strengthen Georgia's election laws and the procedures.

I particularly would like for us to look at improvements that create cost savings, increased efficiencies for our state, county and local governments. With that, I'd like to give you an update on some of the things that we have going on, on the elections front from 2010 and this year, 2011. Last year we introduced our my voter page, voter educational website and I know many of you have probably been to that page where you put your first initial, your last name, date of birth and the county in. It brings up all your individualized voting information on where your precinct is. There's a link for directions to the precinct. We've got early voting times and locations of your early voting site or sites in the counties, just a tremendous amount of information. You can

request an absentee ballot there. You can track that ballot once you mail it in. There's a sample ballot, your individualized sample ballot that you can download. We also have links to candidates' websites, including our judicial races and also ballot questions that were on the November ballot, so a very good resource. It was a way that we are using technology to continue to educate Georgia voters and give them access to our citizens.

We also have a general election this year, an electronic ballot for military and overseas voters, forty-five days before an election. As many of you know there were a lot of states around the country that were getting sued by the justice department because they were not in compliance with that. We were one of the first states to get that passed through the legislature and then implemented the process and we did it while other states were getting sued and some of them were having to hire private vendors. We actually did that whole thing in the House with our own IT people at no cost to the taxpayers and we actually had ballots requested electronically from over 50 different countries around the world. So a great process including our military and overseas voters and helped them have better access.

We've also had a couple of good victories, in my opinion, for the state when it comes to election security. We have filed two lawsuits against the Department of Justice to get our citizenship verification process implemented and then also to have Senate Bill 86, which was passed in 2009, implemented. So we were glad to get that done. In my opinion, that continues to strengthen Georgia elections to make sure that we know who somebody is, where they live and if they're a citizen of this state and this country when they go to vote. The last thing that I want is for any Georgian vote, especially people who work very hard to have that right to vote, to have it cancelled by a non-citizen voting in one of our elections, which has happened in Georgia. But we're going to continue to fight and make sure we have secure and fair elections.

We also introduced our Stop Voter Fraud website and continued our 1-800 hotline number where you and all Georgians can help us with the secure elections process. It's another venue for Georgians that if they see something improper going on during the elections process, they can actually report that suspected fraud or wrongdoing to our website or call our 1-800 number. Many people don't realize that our division has a full law enforcement agency that is by statute able to deal with election law violations and also scope of practice in our licensing division. We're -- we have 19 post-certified officers who have really done a great job, I think, in stepping up emphasis of voter fraud. This year we had a South Georgia county where we actually had a couple candidates in one school board race that we arrested before Christmas on suspicion of absentee ballot fraud. We investigated that case in conjunction with the GBI and local law enforcement and a lot of the tips that we were getting came through our voter fraud website. So we want to continue to make folks aware of that so they can notify us if they see anything improper going on.

We've also increased our partnership in doing training with local law enforcement. A lot of our local law enforcement are very busy, as you all know, and a lot of them don't know that much or understand about election law and what are violations, so we have done a lot of training with the police chiefs and the sheriff's association so we continue to have folks on the ground that understand when violations have occurred and have them to work with us and let us assist them

with that, so we're going to continue that as well.

I wanted to go through a couple of pieces of legislation that passed this year and now awaiting the Governor's signature that should be of interest to the Georgia citizens. The first one is House Bill 454. I'd also like to thank Representative Hamilton; I know he said he carried several pieces of the legislation. We appreciate his support and support of all legislators that are here today on many of these things that we did. House Bill 454 gives the Secretary of State the ability to move the date of the presidential preference primary. We had a date set in the Georgia code and it put us at a disadvantage as we watched what other states were doing and maneuvering around the country in the presidential preference primary process, which is coming up in 2012. This was a bipartisan bill that will give us flexibility as the process moves forward to make sure that Georgia will be in a position to be -- to have a voice in the 2012 presidential preference primary, and the primaries that follow over the next eight to 12 years. So we're continuing to monitor that and we will be working with all sides as we decide what date to set.

House Bill 158 changes the date of judicial and other nonpartisan races from November, back to the general primary date in the summer. This was done because a lot of people were upset about the cost of the runoff elections and our Spring court race and our Court of Appeals statewide race, which was only two runoffs that were on the ballot in a lot of counties and it was a big expense to the state so the legislature decided to change and move the date back to the Summer. We already have a -- normally a runoff going on in the primaries.

House Bill 302 changes the date of the general primary even numbered years following the census to the next to the last Tuesday in August to -- I'm sorry, from the next to the last Tuesday in August to the last Tuesday in July. The reason that we did this is it was in the code that we would have this August date because it's a redistricting year. Well, since that law passed back in 2001, the Military Overseas Voter Empowerment Act was passed that says that we have to have military ballots out forty-five days before an election. Well, this date would actually violate that, when you run the whole calendar for primary runoff, the general election, having those ballots available, so we moved the date back -- the bipartisan bill so everyone understood why we were doing that.

Representative Kidd, Good morning.

MR. KIDD: Good morning.

We did some introductions earlier and this is Representative Rusty Kidd, an Independent in the Georgia House of Representatives and we're glad to have him on our council as well.

House Bill 92 changes the date -- or changes the time period for in-person early voting and I stress in-person early voting. I think one of the things that I heard and a lot of the legislators heard around the state was that the forty-five day in-person early voting period was too long; that the first three weeks of that -- of that six-week period, there were just not many voters coming in to vote early in person, so in a move to help streamline the process, help the counties reduce cost with that legislature, with Representative Hamilton working very hard, I might add, passed the bill with bipartisan support, for the most part, to reduce the time frame for in-person early voting to 21 days.

That day will include the mandatory Saturday, which is new. Currently the counties had an option of doing a Saturday. This will make one Saturday mandatory. There will be a second Saturday that counties can elect to have opened for in-person early voting if they would like. It gives them the option and the last Saturday before the election is specifically prohibited because our local elections officials need that time to prepare for the Tuesday election.

It also makes it to where everybody is going to be starting on the same day. As you know now the law states that you can start two days after your ballot is filled and printed or ready. In a lot of counties we start sometimes up to a week before the rest of the state might be starting and it's kind of confusing to the voters so we shortened that as well.

But I will make a note that this is not shortening the forty-five-day period. You can still vote forty-five days out by mail and we will also have our military and overseas voting opportunities available forty-five days before the election.

Our office will continue to work with our elections officials on the county level and the local level to make sure that we are all prepared and they are prepared for this shortening of time. There will be probably a more condensed -- obviously it's a condensed period and they'll be a few more voters coming in those last three weeks. And in making this change to help give the county flexibilities we also want to make sure that they're prepared. If there are starts to be long lines, they may need to look at the size of their location -- they're going to have more voters -- so that we can handle the demand in a timely manner.

Also, I wanted to mention on a different note that we're in the process now after several years of talking about this of moving forward with a new voter registration system for our state. The key difference in this is that it will be moving us off of the outdated, if you will, mainframe computer system that we have now. We believe that at the end of the day this will lower operations costs for our counties and for the Secretary of State's elections division and as many of you know, we have pop-up federal funds that I would say that Georgia over the years by many past Secretary of State's has been very physically conservative improved with in their expenses. We have pop-up funds that will offset the cost for this so it's a way for us to do something that will further bring our state forward with new government solutions and give our counties and our staff hopefully a little relief and save the state some money.

In moving forward I just wanted to let you all know that if you are here representing a certain group or constituency or members of the press, we want to just make sure that -- we cannot fulfill our mission of introducing meaningful recommendations to improve Georgia elections without input from the public and representatives of organizations, election leaders and elected officials. I want to remind everyone, citizens and others can submit comments and supporting documents on the election advisory council website, which is www.sos.ga.gov/gaeac. You can get that just by simply going to the Secretary of State's website, so if any of you have different groups that you're going to be reporting back to, please forward that information along. We want to hear from everyone in this process.

Our Secretary of State's homepage is sos.ga.gov. We're also up on twitter and Facebook so you

can communicate with us there or you can fill out -- or you can email our office through our website and we have our phone number, obviously too, on our website so I just wanted to make sure that everyone knew how to get in touch with us.

And with that, I'm going to stop for a minute and we'll move onto the public comment period. We do, thank goodness, have a lot of speakers today that we're going to hear from. We did have several folks that pre-registered and I'm going to let those folks go first and then we'll move on to the comment cards and I know that some of these will essentially be duplicates. I hope y'all will bear with us as we move forward.

Let me remind everyone, what we decided to do for this meeting was limit the speakers to three minutes. The reason that we did that is as we go around we have many folks that have traveled for long distances to be here and as much as I know a lot of the metro commuters would like for them to experience rush hour in Atlanta, we would like to try to get them on the road and not experience that, because many of them have four to five hour drives to get home. So we wanted to make sure that we have timely and efficient meetings but we also want to make sure that we can hear from everyone that would like to speak. So what we've asked people to do, is to give us a three-minute overview of their issue or issues and then either today, or later on you can follow back up with our office and submit any supporting documents that you would like and do that through our website or you can just hand those documents to us or submit them to our office later. I will assure you that all of our committee members will receive the exact same documents that are submitted online and we will have discussions on those as our meetings progress.

Our first speaker this morning is Mary Norwood.

Mary, if you'll come forward.

Are we going to let them use the microphone? Jessica will keep your time here so we'll try to keep everybody prompt, if you don't mind.

Welcome. Glad to have you.

MS. NORWOOD: Thank you, sir, and thank you members of the committee and council. I appreciate very much being able to address you.

Public confidence and the integrity of our election under hands our democracy. The legitimacy -- easily lost, it's hard to regain. Whenever we find a weakness in a safeguard to ensure the integrity of the process, we must correct it. I want to call your attention to one such weakness. Georgia relies on a host of volunteers to staff the 2,840 precincts where votes are cast. Their sense of civic duty and commitment to the integrity of the process make our democracy work. I have no doubt in my mind that the vast majority of these volunteer poll workers work hard to get it right. I applaud them but nothing works a hundred percent of the time. A hundred percent is a high bar -- yet public confidence and the integrity of our elections expects a hundred percent. That is why we will safeguard -- the procedures and the record-keeping of our voting to catch the one or two or whatever percent who stray. And because every now and then, we have an election that is very

close, we need to eliminate problems that impact even a relatively small number of precincts. Nothing undermines the integrity of our elections more than a close election that comes under a cloud of suspicion. That safeguard is a small slip of paper, the voters -- that we each fill in by hand when we arrive at the polls. We write in our name, our address, our birth date and the date and place of the election and then we sign it. Then our name, address and birth date and most importantly our signature, matches the name, address and birth date and signature on file with the authorities should guarantee that non-mutual poll workers cannot just let anyone walk in and vote.

This slip of paper is the most important document we can review to assure a fair and equitable elections. When filled out correctly by both the voter and the poll officer with a photo ID presented, did the information match the voter list. Was the same handwriting found on more than one certificate and if so, how many. Was an ineligible address, street, city or zip code included and then scratched out or changed.

In our case, we were denied access to the voter certificates on the grounds that there were dates of birth of the voter signing them. To have access to the certificates we would have had to pay to have redacted copies made, removing those dates of birth, a time-consuming and expensive process. And by the time they would have been ready, the time would have passed to challenge the election results. If in fact, a significant sufficient number of problems were revealed, it could change the election. This was a classic catch 22. Keep in mind that a computer-wide voter list contained the dates of birth. This information is easily obtainable. The lists are available at a modest cost from the Secretary of State. Hence there is no real privacy to protect.

We can remedy this problem by legislation that makes it clear that the inclusion of the date of birth on the voter certificate does not mean that the voter's certificates are not available for public inspection, or eliminate the date of birth on the voter certificate entirely since it is duplicated -- duplicative with the new requirement of a photo ID which contains the voter's date of birth. So I ask you respectively to institute one of those legislative changes. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Ms. Norwood. Would you like to submit that or have you already?

MS. NORWOOD: I have.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you very much. We appreciate those comments.

Two things I want to remind everybody. Representative Hamilton just asked if we were having a transcript of this meeting. We are having this meeting recorded, so that will be available to you if you can't write fast enough like I can't, and I just wanted to make sure that you were aware of that. And Jessica -- don't get mad at Jessica -- I had told her to ring the bell after three minutes. So when you hear the bell, if you would -- I will allow everyone just an opportunity to wrap it up where we can hear your final thoughts.

With that, Garland Favorito.

MR. FAVORITO: Mr. Secretary, I have a handout I'd like to give the council -- I don't know if you want to have somebody else do that -- okay -- which includes a speaking request for future meetings, if I can go into more detail. Mr. Wuckle (ph) who is here beside me asked that --

SECRETARY KEMP: He could what?

MR. FAVORITO: Mr. Wuckle, who is here beside me asked if he could defer his three minutes. Would that be acceptable?

SECRETARY KEMP: We're not going to have defer speaking. As we told you, we're going to give everybody three minutes and we will re-start your three minutes here as soon as Jessica gets back to her seat.

MR. FAVORITO: Okay. The hand out you have is basically -- talks about some facts of this. The first page says -- explains that in 2002 Georgia bought 54 million dollars' worth of electronic voting equipment and in 2004 we were ranked last nationally in the voting system liability recount -- If this seems a surprise to you, it's probably because there's been a few myths that have been propagated about the machines over the last ten years since they were out for evaluation. I wanted to quickly go through five of those myths.

The first one, Georgia voting machines have an independent audit capability. In reality Ray Cobb, the former director of Kennesaw State Center of Election Systems has acknowledged under oath that the machines do not have audit trail independent of the equipment, which would require a lot of time. He explained that these machines recreate images from the internal records after the votes have been recorded and they may have been corrupted.

Internal data is useless in auditing the accuracy of vote recording. And we went from 82 percent, in 2002, to zero percent when the machines were implemented. I can tell you that as a -- computer consultant.

Number two, in order to compensate for that we were told that -- from pre-election testing ensured accuracy. In contrary the election systems commission, federal commission security committee has concluded that they do not have -- to satisfy the -- software is corrupt. The reason for that conclusion is that the machines can be programmed to count differently during testing than during an election. Voting software can detect if the machine is in test mode or election mode and swap votes between candidates without it being detected ever. And that is a concern that all of us should have.

The reason for bringing these points out are -- said that we oppose all forms of electronic voting. In reality we have supported electronic vote -- in 2006 and the electronic -- procedures of SB500 -- voting verified paper audit trails in 2002, which were available then and we only oppose the fact that these machines cannot be -- they can't be verified; therefore the votes can't be audited by officials or recounted for the candidates.

The other myth, item four, it would cost too much to replace the machines. A Maryland study has

concluded that new optical scan equipment would pay for itself in five election cycles. They are configured almost identically to the way we are -- and the Maryland legislature voted overwhelmingly to replace all their equipment and bring back optical scanning.

Finally, the last myth that there have been no major voting machine problems that have occurred in Georgia; in reality there have been quite a few. Test results have been found in live election results. Cobb County caught that error -- found that -- back in 2002 -- in Lowndes County they did not catch it. They were certified in the results. In Cobb we have more blank vote ballots that were recorded in Cobb SPLOSTS than the margins of victory.

And finally, I just want to lead you to the last two points and that is in Douglas County where elections -- 25,000 ballots were taken home and reviewed in the comfort of a Board member's home and then entered into the server.

And then finally the Georgia Supreme Court raised highly questionable where a candidate, who was a virtual recluse had 37,000 votes just this past election. Thank you very much. I'd ask to come back and speak at a future time and go into more detail.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much for those comments.

Our next speaker is Kevin Powell. Kevin here? He had signed up. We'll come back to him.

I call Carl Swensson. Carl here?

MR. SWENSSON: Thank you very much, council. I appreciate the opportunity to be here today. I want to speak to an issue that is an 800 pound element in this room right now. There currently exists no federal office or agency charged with the responsibility of paying presidential candidates to come through our state and be placed on our ballot. The responsibility for that clearly rests with this group and the Secretary of State. This is something that is getting entirely out of control now with evidence that has come before me. It seems that a lot of people are mentioning things like -- well, I'm under the impression that all we had to do was follow the constitution. The constitution clearly gives us the guidelines we need to get our presidential candidates and to make sure that when they get on the ballot here in our state, that they are eligible to do so.

One of the things that the Constitution tells us is in Article 2, Section 1, Clause 5. I do not hear that being mentioned anywhere in the debates that are currently raging across our country, but that is the one area that needs to be addressed. All of us that trust and believe in the constitution, all of you who have taken an oath to uphold and defend that constitution owe it to us, the voters of this state, to be able to ensure that we do in fact have the presidential eligibility assurance. I don't know it was proposed in the HB -- I believe it was and it never made it out of committee, but that didn't address this issue. Again, this is not about checking somebody's birth certificate. This is about actual betting the presidential candidates that come through our area. I must do that at the local level with candidates of the Republican Party and I'd ask this group to put forth some rules that would allow for that betting to occur because no state at present has adequate rules to that, based on Article 2, Section 1 Clause 5, so again, I'm asking this group to consider this. This is of

paramount importance, the integrity of our vote, the integrity of the candidates that are placed on our ballot is at stake and it rests solely with you guys to make it happen. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you very much for those comments.

Our next speaker is -- is the Professor here? I don't see him.

Keith Johnson. Is Keith here? Jack Aiken?

Go ahead, Mr. Aiken.

MR. AIKEN: My name is Jack Aiken and I'm a resident of Atlanta Georgia. Since 1980, I have been continuously involved in the military parties and the Georgia election code that has been a concern to me for many years. I'm very appreciative of the time and attention you as a group have given to this important issue. Thank you for addressing that. As a former registered lobbyist, Chairman of the Libertarian Party of Georgia, the General Election Candidate for Public Service Commission, I have first-hand understanding of the impact and ramification of the Georgia Election Code on the voting process.

In the 1980's I worked closely with -- with the Georgia legislator -- changes in the election code. I recall at that time the United States was working very hard to -- the dictators in Nicaragua. There were more candidates on the presidential ballot in Nicaragua than there were in Georgia. It was just too ironic and not something to be proud of.

But even after changes related to these, ridiculous barriers remained in every political position in Georgia. These arbitative burdens were so heavy that they stifled free and open elections. Georgia ballot access restrictions were the worst in the United States. No other state goes to such lengths to control the ability for ordinary citizens to cast their vote that they want to make.

I'm here today to ask that you have the moral and ethical manner to bring integrity to the ballot of Georgia. There's growing distrust in the government at every level and a lack of confidence in our representation. Almost no ordinary citizen believes there's still integrity in the political process. In big ways and small ways, Georgia -- fraud and -- deals tarnish the notion that there's free and open democracy. There are outrageous restrictions -- there's no moral or ethical basis for limiting the candidate choices available to the citizens of Georgia. The barriers are just political -- The Georgia legislation should be ashamed.

Earlier this week the Wall Street Journal headlined the -- has forecasted and declared that the American era will end in 2016. That is when we will enter the Chinese era of local leadership. If that happens we will not be -- citizens too much or allow too much freedom or too many choices or the specific ability to express those opinions at the ballot. If America falls into that position of local leadership it will be a lost and strangle personal freedom and personal responsibility. It will be because we have choked our -- to death with a -- of bureaucratic -- I ask you take a moral and ethically correct position to do away with the barriers to ballot access for every candidate in Georgia. 2016 is just five years away. It's never too soon to do the right thing. I'd ask that you do it now and that you not linger your personal responsibilities to make it happen. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Mr. Aiken. We appreciate those comments.

Nan Garrett?

MS. GARRETT: Good morning. Thank you. First of all, I'd like to thank the Secretary of State if I can for setting up this advisory council and having these public hearings. I would like to point out that in a way you've done even better than your introductory remarks indicated; when you indicated you had a bipartisan panel here, no you've got a little better than a bipartisan panel. That's what democracy's supposed to be about. Even the most ideas out -- so that the public has the most clear ideas to consider in hopes that the best policy will develop in governments. If the marketplace of ideas in politics is not open to every citizen that has the right to vote, it's not a free market.

Now, most of you are familiar with -- laws here in Georgia -- that were primarily wrote in the 50's and they were primarily designed to keep blacks, Republicans and Communists off the ballot. I think I have to say they've only succeeded with -- Okay. For centuries here, though, the notion of marketplace of ideas goes back to Socrates -- straight on -- the burden of our nation.

When you look at Thomas Jefferson or when you look at Thomas Payne, it's the idea that the best ideas will rise to the top with a free competition and transparent debate is part of -- not just our nation -- but the entire process that started with the age of -- Under our current restricted party -- law -- nobody can be on the ballot unless they choose to associate with one of the two major parties; at least on a top to bottom basis. That -- excluding the Libertarian party but if you're in local races, even the Libertarians don't have statewide ballot access. The rules are enforced even worse than they're written.

In 2002 when I was the Georgia's -- candidate for governor we had a petitioner arrested for seeking petition signatures to put our party on the ballot on the July 4th holiday in a public park. Now, the -- took on that case and it was overturned but if that doesn't cause you to stop and pause, there's something wrong. We have our public officials arresting our citizens who are talking in public park on July 4th about elections. That's a problem; y'all can fix it. The -- legislature can fix it but you can fix it. You've got enough political power in your body that you can make change happen if you really want to. But you've got to stick your neck out on the line. You've got to be willing to face competition. If you truly believe you hold the best ideas, open the election up for competition.

I would like to close just with two more notes. When you're talking about Nicaragua, in Iraq a hundred and eleven parties on the ballot. A hundred and eleven. And the last thing is in regards to ballot access from a humorous perspective -- what does Ralph Nader and Ron Paul have in common, they both believe that the ballot access laws of this nation are -- thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Ms. Garrett. We appreciate those comments.

Representative Buzz Brockway.

MR. BROCKWAY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary and thank you for forming this panel and thank you for all the members for taking time out of your schedule to come and talk about this important issue. I'm a state representative from Lawrenceville, newly elected last fall and am just here speaking on behalf of myself. I just want to bring one thing to your attention today and ask that this committee consider, and that's the idea of the instant runoffs. Instant runoffs basically is just a process that allows the voters to rank their preferences and then those are factored in if you have a runoff situation in candidate races and also you avoid the necessity of asking folks to come back out to the polls again and that's an extensive process which we witnessed just last Fall in a -- race. I have a hand out for you that I'll provide so that you could -- it could be distributed to you later, but I want to point you to the North Carolina. North Carolina has tried this. They have done pilot programs on this. Last Fall they used this process in a statewide judicial race. Last year it was -- there were 13 candidates on the judicial ballot and through using this process they were able to eliminate that runoff and save the taxpayers a lot of money and hopefully also in addition to that, provide a more fair outcome where folks feel like they -- they can still -- even if they're -- even if the frontrunner is not their preferred candidate that they still have the right to go into the voter booth and express their opinion and cast a ballot and not feel like their vote is just thrown away because their preferred candidate is not the frontrunner.

What they've done in North Carolina is they've limited it into three choices. Folks walk in in a multi-candidate race and they rank their top three choices and that I think gets around some of the argument that this process might be too complex. It can be very complex process if you do some of the things I've seen out there where you're splitting votes and things like that. But I think North Carolina has hit on the issue; keep it simple and limit those choices to ranking a couple of their top choices, it can be done. So that's really all I wanted to express to the Secretary. Thank you for your time. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Representative for those comments and for your work in the legislature.

Let's see, Christopher Busing. Did I say that right?

MR. BUSING: My name is Christopher Busing and I live in Clarkston, Georgia and I have run for city council there twice. I've developed a new system for counting ballots which I believe should replace the machines. Everyone in this room knows that when you have compromised elections you have a compromised democratic process and if we have a compromised democratic process ultimately we can lose everything, everything that is dear to us. The only way, in my opinion, to have a better system is to go back to paper. We have to get rid of the machines. Paper can present problems though. There is cumbersome in counting paper ballots. Even though every modern country in Europe, who in many ways are technologically more sophisticated than we, are still using paper ballots. Why do we have to go to machines because Americans are basically techno-bugs. The only way that we are going to solve the legislature of this state going back to paper, is to make it more spectacular than these machines. You've got to prove that paper is more efficient, less expensive and does not compromise the integrity of the election.

Basically my system -- not anything technical about it and it includes the use of the simple overhead projector and the -- it would -- holds the paper where then the light beams are then projected on the wall. There are procedures to follow. I have familiarized -- with the system. He does not necessarily endorse it at this time, but I do want to concede the fact that in this --- this fight he's done 99 and a half percent of all the work as compared to somebody like my one tenth of a percent. If anyone would like to know more about this -- system, please contact Garland Favorito and I do thank you for your time.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much for being here today. The next speaker is Mr. Ray Boyd.

MR. BOYD: My name is Ray Boyd. I am a lifelong resident of the state of Georgia. I want to make these comments very brief, and very short. I'm a -- institution and well-known columnist -- when a politician wants to do nothing and look like they're doing something, they'll form a committee. The book says the issue will be forgotten by the time the committee reports back. That is what Brian Kemp is doing. He's kicking a can down the road hoping for a -- Brian Kemp is just stalling. He does not want fair ballot access in Georgia. Brian Kemp does not want verifiable voting machines in Georgia -- located in San Francisco, California states unequivocally that Georgia is the worst state in the union for failure to have proper ballot access. I have said many times that every registered voter in every state of the union for every elected office should have the same opportunity to be on the ballot if they meet the minimum standards required to -- or -- to appear on the ballot. It is that simple and it should be the law in Georgia and the nation.

I was denied the right to appear at the November -- ballot for governor of Georgia, because of Brian Kemp and his legislative friends played with the -- I appreciate your time and I hope you all will address these issues. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much for being here and we appreciate your comments.

Our next speaker is Faith Coffield. Did I state that right? Will you push that button for me?

MS. COFFIELD: Which one?

SECRETARY KEMP: There you go. See if that's working.

MS. COFFIELD: Good morning, thank you for having me here. I am a former independent candidate for the U.S. Congress from the Fourth Congressional District and I'd like to tell you that what we do as an independent candidates in this country, we are at war with other countries. It makes no sense. It is insane. A government by the people and for the people cannot exist as long as the people have no voice. As long as the people do not have a choice of candidates, other than from between two political parties, we will not have a government that's representative the needs and desires of the people. Right now our government uses -- is on lock down because the Democrats and the Republicans cannot get along. Now, if we had 100 independents in Congress we wouldn't be having this issue. And we talk about the -- in Egypt, Indonesia, and Syria, all of those people that they were opposing were elected but unfortunately they were the only people on

the ballot and they were on the ballot and they had -- the thing that concerns me the most about the situation with the independent candidates is what the requirements are and what the candidates go through. And the way I see this whole situation is that as a black woman I look at voting and the access to the ballot as a civil and human right issue. I remind you that we did not have any -- we had limited -- until the Civil Rights Movement until the Civil Right workers decided that they were going to access the ballot. That is when we had -- we had -- we had -- Baptist Church bombed because people recognized that the right to vote in a fair -- on the ballot where you have a choice of candidates is a big change for things to go on in this country.

You will allow 100 Republicans and you will allow 100 Democrats to run for the same office in the primaries but you will not let the independents get on there -- the signature -- is ridiculous -- they got a lot more power than I do. I -- walk all day in the sun day in and day out. People will not sign these things. They will not sign it because they don't understand it and most importantly are afraid of identity crime. There is nothing that you can tell the voters of this state that prevents you from allowing an independent candidate who is qualified because nowhere in the Constitution does it state that the ballots should be Democrats and Republicans. Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you. I appreciate your comments.
The next speaker is Doris Benit -- is it Benit?

MS. BENIT: I'd like to thank this --

SECRETARY KEMP: Hold on, let me get her mic working there. Try that.

MS. BENIT: I'd like to thank this panel. For the first time since I've been in Georgia I've -- my husband spent 32 years in the air force, my son-in-law served 25 in the Navy and I have voted in every election in every state that we have lived in, but in Georgia I voted two times. The first time I voted I did a straight-party ticket and it flipped the other party. I did it four times. I left not knowing whether I had voted once, four times or not at all.

The second time I pushed the vote button and it wouldn't work. I pushed it again and it wouldn't work, so I went to the person in charge of the precinct and I told her what was happening and she said, you're not pressing the button. Well -- so I told her to come over and watch me. It wouldn't work. I couldn't vote on another machine and I didn't vote that day.

I have lived all over the world and put up with a lot because of this country and I feel very bad when my vote isn't counted. Last -- just one more thing, last night I spent the whole night in the E.R. at Kennestone Hospital. I left there at five minutes to six to come to this hearing. That's what voting means to me. Please, please do something about; let me be hopeful. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much for being here. Okay. That ends the comments on our pre-registration. I wanted to go back and see if Kevin Powell came in. Professor Tomaski? Keith Johnson? Okay.

Well, with that we have Griffin Lostin. Did I say that right?

MR. LOSTIN: My name is Griffin Lostin and I represent the local NAACP here in the state of Georgia and my question of course is accessibility to the ballots and to comment this Board and thank Brian Kemp for making the effort and to listen to all of the comments from each representative, which is diverse. I think that's a good move for the state of Georgia. My concern is a question -- is there an effort that's being placed on the state of Georgia; that's already been commented by one of the independent candidates of Georgia being placed in such a non-pleasing position as have to be challenged and is re-districting and reporting to the Justice Department and being looked at as one of the worse. Again, I comment you for looking at this but I think there should be more light that there are some changes on the way.

We talked about the military ballots and -- investigated on the military ballots, my understanding is that a lot of our military individuals that are overseas -- I have a daughter that's overseas that is serving -- and if it's not a Democrat or Republican she have to request that ballot. Otherwise, you only get the presidential and senior positions to run for. There are two separate ballots. Now, we know how complex the state laws are. How do we expect our military people to vote for local individuals? The only way they can do that, they have to request it. I think it should be a re-vamping, either you can send separate ballots and then there should be a ballot for presidential candidates, the state senate and if you want to then there can be even a ballot that could have that with the local individuals instead of having military people miss out on the opportunity to vote for local individuals.

My concern also is that accessibility -- not only as the NAACP, which is comprised of Democratic and Republican, blacks and white -- to deal with some of the re-districting with the political powers that are in place that might be very difficult to change these laws. When the Democrats were in charge it worked great for them and now they are not in the majority so now the Republicans get the opportunity with the re-districting and have total power on those. I think that's something that would be very difficult for the Board to do but I think it's something that we do need to address. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much for being here today. We appreciate those comments.

Okay. The next speaker is Representative Stephanie Stuckey Benfield.

MS. BENFIELD: Thank you, Secretary Kemp and the members. I appreciate y'all doing this and I also want to thank everyone here today. It means a lot to have people come out and speak about the electoral process and I'm just sorry this room it not standing room only. There really should be more people engaged.

I am here more as past League of Women Voters President. In fact, I was President of the local league in Athens, Secretary Kemp, when I was in law school there and I'm a former state Board member of the League of Women Voters, so I've always been interested in voting issues, more from a nonpartisan perspective; although I do serve in the legislature as a Democrat. I am here primarily on behalf of reforming our ballot access laws. Since I was first elected in 1999, I have

consistently supported legislation to lower petitioning requirements specifically for the state house races; the requirements five percent of registered voters. I think that is too high. I think it's prohibitively high and I would like to see our ballot access laws reformed. As you know they have not been changed since 1943. It's long overdue. We have some of the most restricted ballot access laws in the country.

I've always supported this as a bipartisan effort. I supported it when the Democrats were the majority and we women a minority and I supported it with Independents and Republicans and Rusty Kidd, is our champion this time around on House Bill 494. I'm proud to be co-sponsor and I encourage y'all to look at that piece of legislation and support it. It's a starting point and I know that we're open to the Bill working its way to the process, but I would like to see us make ballot access laws more user friendly in the state.

Finally, I just want to close because I heard Representative Brockway talk about instant runoff voting and that is something I also strongly support and I didn't come here today to speak on that, but I have introduced in the past, legislation to allow instant runoff voting. I think it would increase voter participation especially on the minority voters. I live in a majority/minority district and I see the runoff participation increase dramatically in my own district. And I think it will save money.

I don't know if I have enough time. I will say briefly an -- about the ballot access laws. I have a -- I had -- years ago a Libertarian run against me and he had to go through a petition process and he knocked on my door. I was not home, but my husband answered and he asked my husband to sign the petition so he could be on the ballot, and my husband said, you do know that you have knocked on the door of the incumbent in that race and I am married to her. And the Libertarian looked at my husband and said, well, are you going to sign? My husband did not sign and I busted him and I said, what are you talking about, I sponsored ballot access law and I fully support competition and I truly do. I really do put my money where my mouth is. I think competition is good and way too often we go unchallenged and I think that's part of the process. And so with that, I just thank you all for letting me speak today.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you. We appreciate that.

Our next speaker is Tracy-Ann Nelson.

MS. NELSON: Good morning, members of the committee. I would like to thank the committee for doing this. I'm Tracy-Ann Nelson and I'm the director of the Legal Women Voters and I won't belabor my colleague's point about ballot access, but there's some concern of things that I'd like to mention. The right to vote in our view is fundamental to our democracy and fundamental to the essence and nature of our country so while respectfully I understand that cost has to be a part of the consideration. Cost cannot be at the expense of access for citizens to their voting booths.

The second thing I want to mention is we do support HB158 and HB92 this year. We feel like those pieces of legislation were -- create opportunities for more people to participate in the

process, which is all that we want in place, more participation.

And we commend the Secretary of State's efforts on military and overseas ballot. What we do what you to look at is how local municipal elections are administered and not so much -- I mean I know you're going to look at everything, but local municipal elections across the state continue to be difficult to implement and for citizens to access because of the timing of those elections sometimes and the creation of -- to their access and we hope that this community will -- I know there's lots of attention on the presidential level but local elections have more impact on people's lives on a daily basis in our state than presidential elections so if you could drill down on the municipal elections, the House and Senate elections and see how those are implemented, that would be -- and the changes that I identified will be important to the citizens of Georgia. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Tracy, for all your work.

Our next speaker is Gunther Rucki. If you would push your button for me, please.

MR. RUCKI: Mr. Secretary, your panel, I show up here every so often in order to come back to the very same problem and I may sound like a broken record and that has to do with the voting technology. I have lived in the U.S. for 23 years and in Georgia for 15 years and it was a year after the defeat of my country in 1945 that democracy was re-introduced in my country. Now, I have moved here and I have an opportunity to compare the systems, which many Americans do not have. Neither on an economic level nor on a political level. And I must say sadly, very, very sadly, that democracy in the United States is at near death for two reasons.

First one, I do not trust to look at the integrity of the election system here; and number two, is that money has drowned out competition. The citizens united actually was the knife in the heart of Democracy. That is extremely sad. Now, it has a reason. If the German Constitutional Court banned electronic voting in 2009, after they had a pilot program in 2005 to try out electronic voting, and after 2009 several other European countries banned electronic voting it would be helpful, maybe, and I want to come back to it -- what Ms. Garrett said, that it's the marketplace of ideas that we just look around, what happens in experience in other places -- it would be worthwhile to read the decision of the Constitutional Court why they banned electronic voting. In my very purest idea, there's only one possibility to vote confidentially and with integrity; it is when I -- when I make my decision, I drop my vote into the ballot box. The ballot box does not move. It remains here protected under the eyes of the public and then at the end of the day the ballot box will be opened and counted and that's the way as it is done in Germany and that's the only way that I can think that everyone sees what happens to my vote. I don't trust the human influence in technology. I do trust the technology but I don't trust the possibility for manipulations.

One last word is the format of our comments, what I would like to have is the British system, where we ask you a question and we get an answer from you. It has to go back and forth. Hardly ever do I get a feedback from the issues that I address or other people address. We want to put you on the place. We want to ask the question and get answers, and if they cannot be answered

that day, that there has to be a second day of meeting where those open answers are given. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you very much.

Adam Shapiro.

MR. SHAPIRO: Good morning. Can you hear me?

SECRETARY KEMP: Yes, sir.

MR. SHAPIRO: My name is Adam Shapiro and I am the co-chair of the Georgia -- party and first of all, as far as what my colleagues -- there's one that I think is going to speak later -- but my colleague Nan Garrett has said and what a lot of the others have said to you -- to use the Republican correct term, ditto. But I need to address something here that would not be brought up unless I bring it up. I do believe that the -- system is corrupt. I do believe in the paper trail, but I would state this now as a blind person, I am not willing to have a non-electronic ballot because the electronic ballot has allowed for me and my peers assessable voting. Accessible voting does not mean that someone votes for me. It means that I get the opportunity and my peers get the opportunity to do that independently. That is what that ballot access means for us. We have fought hard for that over the years.

And with all due respect, the gentleman with the paper ballot proposal and some of the others, I urge you to think about that, because we will not give that right up lightly and I was involved in the -- a few years ago, -- was involved in that, and I got -- specifically to insure that the needs of the blind and vision-impaired population be represented. I think it's important to consider that and I thank you very much.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Mr. Shapiro for being here today. We appreciate you attending and we appreciate your comments.

Our next speaker is Beatrice Williams.

Ms. Williams.

MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. Thank you very much, Secretary of State and the committee. I am Beatrice Williams and I want to make sure that everybody have the access to register to vote and are implicated on the process and all the issues. I was born in Florida and I lived in New Jersey for many years. I was the President of the League of Women Voters and as the President of the League of Women Voters in New Jersey I was always open to people registering to vote. I don't think anything should hinder a person from being registered to vote like having -- I don't have access to a copying machine and others -- to make sure that that they are a citizen of the State of Georgia. I thought that was done when they get their driver's license. So that's why I -- they have to have a driver's license in order to vote so why do I have to make a copy of that -- and all kind of other stuff because all I want to do -- so I'd like you to think about these

things and how open access and -- that's why we have all the turmoil in the Middle East today, and in Africa and all those countries so would you please think about this.

And the other thing I'd like to address is the fact that he said we should have a question -- we make our comments but we need to have some way of following up on what is being done. I've been to three of these meetings now and I've never found out exactly what was done after the meeting. There's no feedback or nothing given in return. Thank you very much and have a good and Godly day.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you very much, Ms. Williams.

Our next speaker is John Fortuin.

MR. FORTUIN: I'd like to thank the elections advisory council members for their service today and this is an important opportunity for us to revamp today's problems in Georgia's election system. I come to being a student -- Georgia's election system initially from my background as a computer programmer. I've been a systems analyst, consultant. I have some 20 some years' experience. I came to Georgia and found that you were using electronic voting machines to cast our ballots and I stepped up as an average citizen and together with other citizens co-founded the Defenders of Democracy to be focused on bringing a paper ballot as physical evidence for every vote cast in the city.

I know that with my background in computer science, as well as anyone else who's studied computer programming significantly, has -- it's the goodwill of a programmers that would only allow the use of electronic systems paper trail to an accurate report of both. Any spot in the chain of custody, from the original author of software -- Canada to county level ballot programming provide the opportunity for delivering -- the manipulation of these electronic voting machines.

The Defenders of Democracy has well over a thousand members and we defend the lobbying in the state for paper ballot based election system and for other -- to create evidence for every vote cast in the city. In addition to needing paper ballots where each vote counts, we also insist that as -- are implemented that there are audits of these paper ballots because if the paper ballots are not -- there's still an opportunity for manipulation at the precinct level, as well as further down the line.

There are many issues that I've -- so this commission I appreciate looking into them. One of which is to permit the electronic -- this internet voting pilot. This internet voting pilot in 2010 -- HB665 allows electronic transmission of absentee ballots by military and overseas citizens. Ballots electronically transmitted can be forged and manipulated as demonstrated by the University of Michigan who helped Washington, D.C.'s trial run of internet voting. I will introduce further material through the website for the commission and I thank you for your service.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much, Mr. Fortuin for your comments and feel free to just get us your information whenever you have time.

Our next speaker is Al Herman.

MR. HERMAN: My name is Al Herman. I come here as Treasurer of the Georgia pre-party and on behalf of the officers, members and voters from 158 Georgia counties. We also offer today's written remarks. I have served my community as an officer -- union and I -- from 927 and in 2002, I ran for U.S. Congress in the Seventh Congressional District. The barriers -- the ballot in our campaign were so overwhelming that no one seriously believed we would be able to comply with the law and of course that is the purpose of the five percent signature required designed to swing in and challenge the electoral -- which is not controlled by the ballot but by the political parties. Since its adoption in 1943, the five percent petition barrier has been so effective in its task that only once in 1982 when the court set aside most of its signature requirement -- resolution of the enforcement process was one independent congressional candidate able to put their name on the ballot in a Georgia congressional race. That feat has not been duplicated before or since.

In contrast, nearly every other state is referencing independent candidates on the ballots including our neighbors in Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee. The concept of the two-party system and open and -- consensus and -- in the interest of society has failed. In practice we have the two corporate political parties strategically acting in opposition consequently -- jockeying for control -- the needs of the -- while the interest of -- Democracy in the view of our founding fathers required citizens to have representative access to our governments. To allow for this we must have fair and open and audible public -- elections with a ballot choice reflecting the full range of the political spectrum and the winners elected to proportionally represent the legislative -- Thank you again for this time to address these important issues before the committee and we also will be submitting documents electronically via the website. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you for your comments.

Let's see, did Mr. Kelly Powell come in? Professor Tamoski? Keith Johnson? Was there anyone else here today that did not sign a card and would like to address for a few minutes? Yes, ma'am. If you would, just state your name.

MS. BOYCE: I am Martha Boyce and I spent 30 years outside the U.S. and in seven different countries. When I left the United States we had Democrats and we had Republicans. I returned to Liberals and Conservatives and discovered they were both very nasty words depending on who was stating them. I was also quite concerned about the lack of other parties and I couldn't understand what was going on. Right after I returned the debates were taken away from the League of Women voters and they were replaced with a Democrat, Republican committee that ran the debates. So no other parties can participate. I am quite concerned because to me this is not the Democracy. This is not the country I planned on coming back to and I hope that you will do everything in your power to allow third parties to be on the ballots.

And I'm also concerned about the time that is spent on campaigns and the amount of money. I think the amount of money that's spent, especially in times right now when we're having such economic problems is immoral. I think we should have a cap on the amount of money that can be spent and the amount of time that can be spent. I've discovered a lot of people that as soon as

they're elected to office are working on the next campaign and this could be avoided. I hope you do some more committees like this. I haven't heard about what was happening today until my friend Doris told me. I think it should be really out -- get the people out. Most people think they don't have a voice. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you. If you don't mind, would you give us your last name again?

MS. BOYCE: Boyce.

SECRETARY KEMP: Boyce. Okay. And if you don't mind I'm going to get Jessica to let you fill out our sign-up card just so we have your information. Thank you for your comment today.

Okay. I think that does it for our public speakers today. What our next part of the agenda was to let our committee members who I will say represent a broad spectrum of different interests and constituency across the state. We certainly want to hear from them. If there are any issues that they would like, then we'll go in reversal at this time and ask Mayor Schwabe -- don't feel like you have to say anything if you don't want to. But if you do have any issues, we'd like to get those on the table too at our first meeting.

MR. SCHWABE: Thank you Mr. Secretary. I would just like to say that we've got a lot of work ahead of us, it sounds like. I'd like to thank everyone for coming. I do have some issues, locally and what we could get -- but one of the things that was expressed to me locally was the issue of voter's names being dropped from the registration list and -- I'm also very worried about campaign spending and the length of the campaign, so at the appropriate time I would love to have a little more detail and discussion about those issues.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Mayor.

MS. BOREN: I just hope to provide any expertise or experience that I have and suggestions that we receive from the citizens or the commission and really just talk about them. It's easy to talk about changes but then trying to implement those changes -- and I hope to give practical advice, or practical experience in implementing changes such as what the citizens discussed.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Nancy.

MR. BARCLIFT: We really don't have any issues with paper ballots and I don't know what the solution is with between paper ballots and electronic voting machines. They're -- I guess those issues -- I'm interested in looking into that and seeing what can be done about that, as far as which the best way to go for the state of Georgia is.

SECRETARY KEMP: Let me give you Representative Kidd. Put that mic close to him.

MR. KIDD:: I apologize for being late, but I'm glad I got here in time to hear all those

comments. I know what it takes to go through the petition process and no matter who you are or what county you're in, what your precinct might be, it's a very difficult and time-consuming process. I suppose there are a lot of reasons -- and access something other than party members. I strive to continue to do that here and I hope that -- we will look at a lot of the comments made here and access to everyone. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Representative.

Mike?

MR. JABLONSKI: Yes, I have several issues but right now I really want to talk about two. The first is I think we are wise if we engaged in discussion over the manner in which we vote. I think the time has come when we have voting machine where this committee in particular needs to go back and take a look at what they do well and what they don't do well and analyze the cost, because let's face it, cost is also a factor, but it is also worth that people have faith in the outcome and I -- one of the areas I study is -- analysis. This -- the voting machines are part of a system and you can't just look at the machine. You have to take a look at the people who protect the machine and program and a bunch of other factors and I hope that's something that this committee looks at. It may be --

I have one issue about machines that has not been raised, which is an issue that I'm particularly concerned with and it's why I welcome the debate here, is that I suspect that the machines we purchased are coming to the end of their useful life, which will mean that at some time -- I do not know when -- but I suspect it's going to be around the immediate future, we will have to replace the way that we are voting statewide. That will be an enormous expense and one currently the state cannot afford and I think what we can do, is we can use this committee to inform that decision when it's eventually made. I want to thank everybody for their comments on that.

The second is I have said in the beginning that my principal issue of the election code is its complexity. The election code needs to be something that candidates, voters and sometimes judges and lawyers can look at and understand fairly immediately. I was listening to statements that people made as to what the current state of the law is. I'm not going to call some people out, but there have been at least four misstatements of what law is. Now, I'm not calling anybody and nobody is trying to mislead this committee or mislead the other voters. The comments were well meaning. The problem to me that is -- is that you know I've been doing this stuff for 30 years and I still make mistakes when I read the election code. We've got to simplify it. One thing we can do and in particularly going back to the comments about the municipal elections, is I think we would vastly simplify the election code if we had separate chapters for municipal elections, for state-wide elections, maybe even for presidential preference primaries. Although that might increase the length of the code, what it would do is decrease the complexity of the -- of the sentences that we use in the code.

Right now, for example, we talk about when somebody is running for the House of Representatives they have to, you know, X,Y,Z, but in the same sentence if you are running for a municipal office this section does not apply and it refers to another section. You can simplify all

that by just saying this chapter applies to municipal elections. This chapter applies to statewide elections, things like that. But I think there's several things we can do to -- to make it easier to understand the election code and one of the things I'm going to do is provide some analysis of the readability of the code. One of the areas I studied -- is how understandable documents are and just for my own application, I ran computer programming on the election code to see what level of readability you needed to have in order to understand the election code and it was off the charts. It was -- you know, I've been through law school and you needed a higher level than I had in order to really understand it. That's wrong. Government needs to be for people. And when we cast laws that people do not understand, I don't know how we can do that. And I think that's something that this committee can address.

SECRETARY KEMP: Very, very good comments.

Beth, have you got anything?

MS. KISH: Just a word or two. I want to thank you for asking me to serve. As -- as an administrator it's really our job to implement what is written in the law and what's decided by the people. So I'm going to say we have big issues in terms of advocating or, you know, differences in the way -- but I see my position as being -- making sure that the decisions that are decided upon, are implementable, if that's a word; that we can do it; that it makes sense on ground and that it won't cause more confusion; hopefully that it, you know -- not necessarily that it won't cause cost, because as our members have already said, you know, there are costs associated with democracy but that the costs our out in front in the beginning so everyone understands the cost and a decision is made taking the cost into account. So that's basically why I'm here.

I have some -- a lot of little things in the code that I'd like us to look at that and as an administrator I can look at that just don't make sense. But in terms of the big issues, I just hope through my experience it will help make it work the way people want it to work.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much, Beth.

Representative Hamilton?

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. First, I want to thank everybody for being here, whether you're serving on the advisory council or whether you're in the audience. I appreciate your comments. One of the reasons that I'm happy that I'm on this council is that it's very likely that whatever legislation should come as a result of this council, I'll probably see -- or it's very likely I'll see it in our committee and it's great that we have two committee members that are also in the House and I always appreciate Representative Kidd's independent views and we don't always agree on things but he brings a lot to the table and for the voter access I think he'll be a very reasonable voice in this process and so I look forward to working with him and other committee members as they look at that.

I think that Mike made some great comments. I want to compliment him on that. One of the things he talked about was simplifying the very complex issues and that's really where I come in.

I'm an engineer by degree and training and I like to think about and I approach things in a very consistent pattern, a very efficient manner. I think that you're exactly right that there are many things that we can do. The problem with our normal legislation process -- or one problem is that we fix one problem and we end up creating two other problems, so I think that hopefully -- I don't want anybody to misunderstand, reform is very hard. It is very hard to get -- you see all these varying opinions, but that's one thing I do look forward to on this council and hopefully -- we'll look at it from a very complex standpoint and see if there isn't something we can do to come together.

The House Bill 655 was mentioned and I was the author of that Bill -- very strong work with the military. I think that -- matter of fact, when I passed this Bill several years ago my comments -- we give them a ballot and I think we've got men and women serving our country in harm's way and it's ridiculous that we can't do that so I'm going to see us move forward so that we can continue to -- vote overseas.

And I also want to insure voter access. Many times it's a lot easier said than done, but I think it's certainly something we will look at. Security is certainly an issue that we want to keep in mind during this whole thing.

And then my good friend, Tracy-Ann Nelson, I appreciate her support and I agree with her that costs should not be the determining factor but I think that we need to look at costs from an efficiency standpoint. I think early voting is a great example of that. If we continue to ensure voter access and at the same time we're doing it in a more efficient manner and I look forward to serving this council.

And then I had one other thing that hasn't been mentioned today, and there is some legislation out there but I just want to kind of bring it up and that is -- I think that now after a couple years it's time to look at the -- the call election process right now that we -- you know, we've changed a few years ago, the ability to have two elections, respective elections, Fall elections and I want to continue to look at that. I unfortunately still think there's some communities out there that -- the system and schedule elections on certain things, certain times and so I want to look at that whole process to see -- make sure that we're not -- the system; that we're holding elections at the right time so that the people will have the opportunity to go to the ballot box and do that.

And that's it. I look forward to working with those of you in the audience as well as the advisory council up here. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Representative.

Judge Blackwell?

MR. BLACKWELL: Thank you, Secretary Kemp for the honor of serving this committee. Like Ms. Kish and others, we're not policy makers. We're not lawmakers. We serve a different role and that is, we're required to train our local people to conduct an election. Where Ms. Kish deals with registration and supervision, with my county and the others like mine, we have not combined a Board but you have a Board of Registrar and a probate judge that conducts elections as

part of it. That's the beauty of the Board. We're all from the different the parts of the equation. So we come together.

Hopefully what I bring to the table is the experience of supervising right at 40 elections now so I pretty much know what it takes to pull off an election, the things that co-workers should be doing. I understand that your concerns when you say there are problems in the precincts. I believe it was Ms. Norwood that talked about code certificates and some issues about precincts so we want to avoid that on election day where I'm conducting an election and no matter how well I understand the code, you know I have maybe a hundred co-workers who are out working, not under my direct supervision but -- precincts.

I have some thoughts on that but I really won't go into it today but we'll discuss that along the way. What I want to do is come in today with an open mind and just be neutral from the spot that I'm in and just listen to what you have to say and then kind of process that and then if we come back, hopefully we can evolve into some changes that are good for us on the elections part and good for you as the public and -- for what you want to see. And I understand that not all things will happen but hopefully we will bring some of these things together for the upcoming elections. Thank you, Secretary Kemp.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Judge. I appreciate your comments and service.

Senator Davis?

MR. DAVIS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I look forward to your efforts to not only put together this council but also to listen to the issue we're facing. I serve as a member of the Ethics Committee which hears all the -- related to the elections and I too look forward to the -- any of the things that we may come up with this off season and then deal with it next year. My concerns have certainly have been iterated by both in the audience and from the panel.

One or two additional items of interest to me are the costs of the elections. There's a lot of discussion in terms of how we can be more efficient and I think we would have to look at cost implications and the way people -- overhead and the people that are manning precincts, etcetera, so I'm interested in that.

I too share Mike's concerns about readability of the elections code. That's the engineer looking for ways to be simple but be accurate and I too want to delve into that.

And then the final thing, my good friend, Representative Mark Hamilton has done an outstanding job over the last several years. I've been a strong advocate for having our military folks to be engaged in this process. My engineering -- expanding -- look at expanding access because of security, how we manage the credentials to insure that those individuals are who we say they are -- or who they say they are and so I'll be looking for opportunities to really delve into that process as we move forward to make sure that, you know, we are using some of those technologies that we use in a -- that I know verifies and validates who people are and the appropriate credentials. So again, thank you for all that you have done today and for putting this together.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Senator for your service and we appreciate you being on the committee.

Let's see, Ms. Lewis?

MS. LEWIS: I also wanted to commend everybody for coming today. I think you all recognize and some of you said it directly, democracy takes work and you're willing to be here today and do that work so I thank you for that and I applaud you for that. I also want to thank the Secretary for allowing me to participate in this council. I've been doing election work for about 20 years and over the course of those 20 years I have seen a lot of things that can be cleaned up in the election code and my basic reason for wanting to serve on this council, is to make it easier for people to follow the law; for voters, candidates, elected officials, judges and of course for lawyers. I think people should understand how it is that they should participate and how it is that you should be able to challenge an election and how to do that and I think for the most part, only lawyers and judges can understand that and sometimes we can't understand that either, exactly how the process works.

And I think that a lot of times when people talk about changing a set of rules or changing the code section, there's an automatic objection on the part of some of them saying, well, -- broken and I think it's great and the change does not criticize those who make that -- section that we look at it and say, we could make this a little bit better. This is a practical matter and sometimes in the course of the years -- I'm sure the legislature can agree that you change something in one section and you forget to change another section so you have sections that don't necessarily agree with one another, and maybe some of the things in the section become very outdated and not even used anymore so I think there's a great opportunity to clean up the election code.

I think that -- oh, I went to a luncheon yesterday and the speaker was talking about the fact that Americans were different from other cultures in that before we try anything we want to be one hundred percent sure that it's going to work so we put off and we put off and we put off even starting to make the changes because we're afraid it won't work. Where in other cultures they say, let's get going, let's make some changes and that's -- one, is you started down the road and the other is you're not so -- to what you did that you can't make changes. And I think what we've heard here today is that there are -- there's a need for change in the election code and that's come about as a matter of history. It may have come about because the original part of the objection wasn't correct. But I think there's a great opportunity out there and I applaud the secretary for taking this on. I think you may have all seen that the election code was recently -- the evidence code recently revised, but hopefully it won't take quite that long as the election code to be revised. It took about 20 years. But I do appreciate the opportunity and I appreciate you all being here today.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Anne.

David?

MR. SHOCK: I want to thank the Secretary of State Brian Kemp for organizing this advisory council to examine the current election laws and rules. My main election issue is ballot access for third-party independent candidates. To get on the ballot, as you've heard today, as a candidate of a third-party or as an independent, requires a large number of petition signatures, plus payment of a fairly substantial filing fee. For statewide office a petitioner's requirement is one percent of all registered voters and for district level races and incumbent -- races it's five percent. One of the problems with folks, registered voters -- and not for the last -- for instance to vote for governor in the district there are many registered voters who really aren't in the district anymore and so -- they move away or they pass away and so there's a need to change the law.

Just to give you an example of the burdens that a third party U.S. House member potential candidate would face, a Libertarian, for instance, running for U.S. House would need to collect between 15 and 20,000 petition signatures, plus pay a \$5,000 filing fee. Democrats and Republicans can get on the ballot by simply paying the filing fee. The current petition signature requirements, as I mentioned, were put into place during the type of cold war when there was a fear of communism. These days are long gone and it is time to reform the ballot access laws so that they treat candidates of all political parties equally under the law.

Georgia law does treat all candidates equally in special elections. For instance for U.S. House and state legislature all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, or independent status are able to get on the ballot by paying a filing fee. But for general -- office -- a large petition requirement is necessary if you're not running as a Republican or Democrat. The ballot access laws here in Georgia are a black eye on democracy in this state. In -- as I mentioned the current ballot access laws for special elections do treat all candidates equally and they do -- the special election laws do provide foundation for reforming the general election ballot access requirements.

And in closing I just want to thank Brian Kemp for organizing this council and also for everybody who's serving on the council and I also want to thank everybody who has attended today. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you.

MS. SOSEBEE: Thank you for allowing us as committee members to address you, Secretary Kemp. I want to thank you, those who are here and who express concerns about the state election code. We will not get a hundred percent support of the elections but it's workable and I look forward to the comments to be given to give my input, as well as to just make a comment about one thing that I'm thrilled about is, looking at costs of elections and what we can do to cut costs and one of the things that I would like to see is municipal elections being included in the -- in your election process. There will also be at the -- when there is a general election or statewide election going on, that's one of the things that I would like to see in the state of Georgia.

And then to just say that I'm just thrilled to be a part of this committee and I look forward to hearing from you from time to time, as well as looking at what we can do based on the law and what changes we can make. Thank you, Secretary Kemp.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you so much for serving.

Chairman Sinyard, wrap this up for us.

MR. SINYARD: Secretary, I appreciate being here and thank you for this appointment. This has been a hearing, I think, that's exciting to see folks that will come from their homes and their businesses to speak what's on their mind. I think this council was a good idea and it has a very diverse group of folks from all over the state of Georgia. I think most of us in the room would like to see some simplification from the code. I think most of us in the room would like to continue to enhance the integrity of the voting process. And to our representatives and senators, the military ballot is very, very important. We have a marine base in Albany, Georgia so -- and we always love the marines -- and we are very, very strong advocates of this process and this movement to allow more access to our military.

So I'd like to thank everyone for being here today. It's hopefully going to have some great results that will make our process in Georgia better in the elections standards. Thank you.

SECRETARY KEMP: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you again for all serving and being here today. I think what we'll do now is we'll take a lunch break and then when we come back we'll discuss some of the issues that have been submitted on the website and a few of the things that we have. So why don't we start back about 1:00 in the afternoon session. I don't think it will take us too long to wrap it up this afternoon. We'll break for lunch until 1:00.

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(Whereupon, a lunch break was taken.)

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SECRETARY KEMP: Let's see, next on our agenda we had -- I wanted to go over the information that has been submitted through the website or through our office in some way just to make sure that you all were aware of these issues. Some of them we have heard today, so I'm just going to go through those real quickly and see if anyone has any questions or if you would like more information, please let me know.

The first one we've got is about voting machines, the paper received, paper ballot issue. We've had several speakers today that spoke of that and everybody's aware of this. We actually had four or five different submissions on the machine, basically saying they were untrustworthy, non-verifiable, that the machine should be upgraded or replaced; another one do away with the machines. Others were saying that we should go to a paper ballot and I know we've talked about that today.

The next issue that we've got is they were suggesting to strengthen Georgia's election laws, a way to strengthen it is to have the state election board be more representative body of the Georgia elections. And there are a number of men and women of color serving now and although the women are the clear majority voters, people of color are a significant portion of the electorate.

I will tell you that the way this is handled now, just so you'll know, the Georgia code -- the state

elections board is composed of the Secretary of State, one member who is elected by the Georgia House of Representative and one member from the Georgia -- that's elected by the Georgia senate and then one member elected by the Georgia Republican party and one member elected by the Democrat Party of Georgia so that's how you get five board members now.

Another -- in that same email there was another suggestion to revise the election observation rules; basically for poll watchers that rule in law is in the Code 21-2-408, so we did address that there. There are things we need to look at and I'm sure that's part of what we can do; look at the code and see what changes we need to make.

The next comment was the requiring oath before coming before the state election's board meeting and making oral complaints about election issues and whether the state election board can require this.

The next issue is the Secretary of State's elections website. The question says it should list online every election being held, including local county and city elections, list all SPLOST votes. This person said they needed to know when an election is no matter how small; when it would be held anywhere in the state. I would comment as that's basically impossible for a Secretary of State to put all that information on the website. There's a lot of these elections we don't administer. They're done at the local level.

The next issue was early voting is too long and the absentee ballot process. As far as the early voting being too long I mentioned it in my opening comment. It's part of the legislation that this year was House Bill 92 reduces the in-person early voting to three weeks. So I think that's an issue that certainly the legislature heard about and took some action on this year and will remind you that that Bill still needs to be signed by the Governor.

The second part of that question was that each county should mandate to begin counting absentee ballots and the morning of the primary day instead of waiting until the 7:00 p.m. closing date.

I will note that all the counties are not required to start tabulating their absentee ballots until 7:00 p.m. on the day of the primary election or runoff. They are allowed to begin the tabulation process at 7:00 a.m., if they so choose and that's in the Georgia code as well.

The next questioner information we got was voting at a polling place outside your precinct. I think this kind of goes to the issue of vote centers. They're saying that any voter should be able to vote at any polling place within the county regardless of the precinct. They say the technology exists to load the appropriate ballot onto any voting machine -- at their county or at a satellite voting center and vote as you vote by mail.

There are some interesting things going on, I think, around the country and even around the state in some counties in regards to vote centers and I'm sure that that's something that we'll be talking about.

The next information is accurate voter registration database. This person wanted to make sure

that we maintained accurate voter rolls and review records to remove dead voters, address verification and bring the suspected registration to an official's attention such as 20 registrations coming from a two bedroom residence.

That's something that we continue to work on every day in our office and I think having a voter registration system will help that as well. And I certainly would remind everyone if you have concerns or allegations, let our investigators know and we'll be glad to look into that. We had a comment about instant runoff voting. Representative Brockway spoke to us about that one and a couple other secrets. And we've got that on our plate to discuss.

More ballot choices in instant runoff voting. Again, we talked about instant runoff voting. This person said they'd also like to see more choices on ballot. Basically we talked about -- several of our speakers did today talk about ballot access restrictions.

The next issue was voter guides produced by the Secretary of State's office. The biggest election problem is uneducated voters and we should do more to detail that and I think we addressed that last year with our MVP day and it created a lot of information for Georgia voters. There's also been organizations that put out voter guides and things of that nature, not to mention probably more information than what you want coming from candidates. And we'll continue to work on making sure that Georgians are educated about voters and I think over the years most of the people will agree with the Secretary of State.

Before being in our current administration I think we were very proactive about educating Georgia and our elections and putting information out there. I know that the counties and municipalities do that as well. Certainly as we move forward if there are any other ideas we will be glad to look at those.

The next part of that question, they believe that the Georgia's elections can be strengthened by conducting independent audits of all Boards of Elections, examining a lot of different things.

We talked also about use of government resources by challenged candidates and challenging candidates' ability to reach voters in a district during a campaign period, discusses disinterested parties at poll locations be monitored to determine if poll workers have been instructed to encourage provisional voting. Developing and implementing a paper system to reconcile counts.

He goes on to talk about the same questions about ballot access reducing the -- for independent candidates especially the U. S. House and that's addressed in the code. It has been addressed by several of our speakers.

Garland Favorito, who was one of our speakers today, listed and I think he gave out to everyone a list of information that he's been concerned about. I'll just run through those quickly. Implement auditable voting equipment, establish precinct level audit procedures, eliminate early voting security vulnerabilities, remove candidate petitioning requirements, ban lobbyist funding and influence, eliminate district gerrymandering and make the state elections board nonpartisan, make the elections investigations nonpartisan, eliminate the taxpayers subsidies for primaries and

implement instant runoff voting. I want to make sure y'all have that. I think you have a hand-out on that.

Some additional comments that we've got here in the last few hours as we were getting for ready today, there was a comment about absentee ballots being a major concern because of the security, should we schedule the primaries early. This is addressed and the next issue is addressed in the presidential preference primaries. Should we schedule our primaries as early as allowed in order to participate in the national convention. Early primaries give Georgia the opportunity to make a difference and have an impact on who the nominee is for both parties. We did address this, as I mentioned earlier, in our legislative update with the legislature this year given the Secretary of State, the presidential preference primary to make sure that Georgia is in that process. And I'd like to add that that's, you know -- if that law stays in place, it won't just be this year, it will be for years to come, you know, no matter which side of the political aisle, this is going to be figuring out who the nominee is.

The next comment was revise where voters can vote. In other words, where they are homesteaded with the state, just like taxes. Voting is taking place where voters have a secondary home, greatly affecting the local "pulse" of government. Husbands and wives are splitting their vote; one at Homestead County and one at secondary home. How can this be fair when the vote at secondary home county is where they do not spend the majority of their time in state for the year. This is clearly a loophole in the state election law. It needs to be reviewed.

I think this goes to the point that Mike and Anne both were talking about simplifying the state elections code and I think that's something that, you know, we definitely need to address issues like that and make it -- see if there's a way that we can continue to make the code more clearer and simpler to read for us non-lawyers.

The next comment was in rural precincts that they need to be combined into single voting places. Here again, there were some comments earlier.

The next comment is we need a more comprehensive voting education program. It's often convenient to -- if it's too often convenient to believe that the population is voter illiterate -- literate, yes, sorry. But anyway, we kind of discussed that earlier. And then lastly, require those seeking elected office to comply with election law in order to -- in order for their name to be placed on the ballot as a candidate. If you want to run for office, you must comply with campaign ethics laws or you cannot be a candidate. This could be done by adding the following language to Section f of Chapter 2 of Title 21. Quote, if a candidate has filed all required campaign contributions disclosure report and paid any fees associated with late filings. We've had that suggestion as well.

That kind of wraps up what I have. I would like to mention that -- and let me talk a little bit about this -- but we've heard a lot today about a lot of big issues, but I have written it down, even before we had this discussion, we need to make sure that we continue to -- well, I've got two more comments. I'm missing a page. The next comment was passed legislation requiring anybody running for office on any level provide proof of eligibility to serve. This is vital to the survival of

the Republic. I think we had a speaker mention that today.

And lastly, two suggestions, please enable online voting. If we make a financial transaction secure online, surely we should be able to vote securely online by now. In doing so, of course, will enable great convenience in voter participation, reducing the barriers of independent candidates, allow more choice and innovation in our government, validate the tradition of political duopoly, I guess is what that says, -- has been holding our state back.

And then lastly is to mention there, we've heard a lot about a lot of big issues but there's also a lot of small things that I know our elected officials deal with, that our local elections people deal with every day and a lot of times when you go -- and I think sometimes everybody talks about and the press prints about the big issues, but there's a lot of changes we can make with just simplification in addressing some of the small issues, so I would charge all those, including myself and the Secretary of State's staff to continue to look at the little things as well as some of these bigger issues as we go forward and we certainly would like to charge everyone to do that as well.

I did want to make sure that all the committee members -- we'll make sure we email this to you, if we have not already -- but I also want to make sure that the public knows that -- I know we've announced our Savannah meeting which will be Wednesday, May 25th in 2011, obviously, at 1:00 at the Savannah Marriott River Front in Savannah, Georgia. We are going to try to do -- we will do two additional meetings around the state. On Wednesday, June the 15th, we will be having our Albany meeting. So Albany will be Wednesday, June 15th and that will be at the City County Government Center. Mr. Chairman, I look forward to being down in your territory.

And then on Tuesday, July 19th, we'll have a meeting in Augusta, Senator Davis, at 10:00 in the Julian Smith Building at Lake Homestead Park and we'll make sure that we get all the committee members that information. But we also want to make the public aware of that. We will put that up on our website as well.

With that, I would like to again thank everybody for their participation today and thank you for traveling to Atlanta and being willing to use your time, your resources to help our elections process in Georgia be better tomorrow than it is today, and I would like to ask if there's any members of the committee have anything else, any further business they would like to discuss, anything that we need to get the committee or any information that they'd like to hear about in the future.

BOARD MEMBER: A summary of the meeting.

SECRETARY KEMP: Yeah, we'll have the -- we'll have a transcript available. We can also -- we'll continue to update -- we'll update you with issues that we have on the table and as more come in, we'll continue to apprise you of that. Anybody else got anything?
(No response).

SECRETARY KEMP: Hearing none, we'll adjourn the meeting and wish everyone safe travels and we hope to see you in Savannah. Thank you.

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(Whereupon, the meeting was concluded at approximately 1:35 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

STATE OF GEORGIA

COUNTY OF BARROW

I hereby certify that the foregoing meeting was taken down, and was all reduced to typewriting under my direction; that the foregoing transcript is a true and correct record given to the best of my ability.

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